

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 EUR-25 IO-12 AID-20 IGA-02 DPW-01 PM-09

NSC-10 SS-15 RSC-01 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00

RSR-01 /121 W

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R 251128 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 741

INFO USDEL JEC PARIS

S E C R E T SAIGON 7193

EO 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PINS PINT MILI VS

SUBJ: PROPOSAL FOR USG ENCOURAGEMENT OF GVN- PRG DISCUSSIONS IN THE  
FIELD

HEREWITH REPEAT OF AMCONSUL NHA TRANG 416 FOR YOUR ACTION/ INFO  
QUOTE

S E C R E T NHA TRANG 0416

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT MILI VS

SUBJECT: PROPOSAL FOR USG ENCOURAGEMENT OF GVN- PRG DISCUSSIONS  
IN THE FIELD.

REF: NHA TRANG 0410

1. SUMMARY: THROUGH HIS CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH BRIG. GEN. TRAN  
VAN CAM, COMMANDER OF ARVN 23 RD DIV., POLOFF IN KONTUM HAS  
HAD PROBABLY UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO GAIN INFORMATION ABOUT NVA/ VC  
APPROACHES TO ARVN ON SUBJECTS AS PRISONER EXCHANGES AND TERRITORIAL  
DEMARCATON. CAM, IN TURN, IS ONE OF FEW GVN COMMANDERS WHO HAS  
SHOWN INTEREST IN FOLLOWING UP PRISONER RELEASES. ON BASIS THIS  
EXPERIENCE,  
POLOFF HAS PRESENTED PERSONAL PROPOSAL THAT USG ENCOURAGE  
GVN TO TAKE SOME INITIATIVE IN SUCH CONVERSATIONS. ON ASSUMPTION  
THAT USG WOULD STILL FAVOR IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 4 OF CEASE-  
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FIRE PROTOCOL THREE MONTHS AFTER THE DATE ENVISAGED BY MAKERS OF  
PARIS AGREEMENT, I ENDORSE CONCEPT IN GENERAL. END SUMMARY.

2. FOLLOWING IS GIST OF FIRST- PERSON MEMO ( UNNECESSARY WORDS

OMITTED) FROM FSO RICHARD W. MUELLER STATIONED IN KONTUM. ORIGINAL MEMO DATED APRIL 12, AND SOME UP- DATING DONE HERE:

3. " ATTENTION FOCUSED IN RECENT WEEKS ON NVA INFILTRATION OF MEN AND SUPPLIES AND ON CONTINUING FIGHTING IN THE SOUTH MAY BE MASKING A POTENTIALLY MORE SIGNIFICANT AND HOPEFUL DEVELOPMENT: THE NUMEROUS DISCUSSIONS AND MEETINGS BETWEEN LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES OF NVA/ VC AND RVNAF, PARTICULARLY IN KONTUM AND, AT EARLIER STATE, IN PLEIKU.

4. " WHILE I DOUBT THAT OTHER SIDE HAS GIVEN UP HOPE OF ULTIMATELY REUNITING NVN AND SVN UNDER LEADERSHIP OF HAILOI, I BELIEVE THERE MAY BE STRONG DESIRE ON PART OF NVA/ VC TO 'LIE LOW' FOR AT LEAST A WHILE AND ENGAGE IN SERIOUS EXCHANGES WITH RVNAF FIELD COMMANDERS TO SEE WHETHER SUCH CONTACTS MIGHT PRODUCE CONCRETE RESULTS. I OFFER SEVERAL INSTANCES IN SUPPORT OF THIS THESIS:

" A. TO BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, ALL SUCH CONTACTS IN KONTUM HAVE BEEN AT NVA/ VC INITIATIVE. ENEMY HAS USUALLY MADE CONTACT BY RADIO AND PROPOSED THAT COMMANDERS MEET TO DISCUSS PRISONER EXCHANGE, DEMARCATION LINES, ETC. IT IS CLEAR THAT GVN HAS SO FAR ONLY BEEN REACTING TO ADVANCES BY OTHER SIDE.

" B. IN KONTUM, NVA/ VC HAVE UNILATERALLY RELEASED ARVN PRISONERS ON FOUR SEPARATE OCCASIONS: (1) FOURTEEN ARVN NORTH OF KONTUM ON/ ABOUT FEB. 13; (2) THREE SOLDIERS IN CHU PAO PASS AREA ON/ ABOUT APRIL 4; (3) 28 SOLDIERS NORTH OF KONTUM ON APRIL 9; (4) 29 MORE NORTH OF KONTUM ON APRIL 16. WHILE PRISONERS RELEASED EARLY ON WERE SICK OR WOUNDED, MOST OF THOSE IN LAST TWO GROUPS WERE ABLE- BODIED. THOSE RELEASED WERE NOT ON ORIGINAL LIST OF PW' S FURNISHED BY PRG, AND THEY WERE RETURNED WITHOUT ANY SPECIFIC

CONCESSION SUCH AS RELEASE OF NVA PRISONERS. EVEN BR OBMV GEN. CAM HAS SPECULATED THAT OTHER SIDE MAY BE TRYING TO 'MAKE GOOD WILL' THROUGH THESE RELEASES.

" C. IN PLEIKU, OTHER SIDE HAS TRIED SINCE EARLY FEB. TO CONTACT ARVN RANGERS IN PLEI YIT/ THANH GIAO AREA, ALTHOUGH MR 2 COMMANDER MAJ. GEN. TOAN HAS REBUFFED THESE INITIATIVES, AND PRG AT DUC CO HAS APPARENTLY TRIED TO PASS MESSAGE TO GVN VIA HUNGARIANS  
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AND AMERICANS SINCE IT FELT REBUFFED IN DIRECT ATTEMPTS. (SEE REFTEL.)

5. " I BELIEVE GVN HAS MUCH TO GAIN BY DROPPING GENERALLY HARD- LINE POSITION AGAINST DISCUSSIONS AND BY VIGOROUSLY IMPLEMENTING ART. 4 OF JMC PROTOCOL TO PARIS AGREEMENT. AS NOTED, OTHER SIDE HAS SHOWN SOME WILLINGNESS, ALTHOUGH ADMITTEDLY IT IS NOT ACTING FROM PURELY ALTRUISTIC MOTIVES. HOWEVER, SO LONG AS GVN KEEPS UP ITS GUARD, IT WOULD HAVE LITTLE TO LOSE AND POSSIBLY MUCH TO GAIN IN PURSUING POSSIBILITIES OF THESE LOCAL MEETINGS.

6. " PATH TO TRUE PEACE IN SVN LIES IN GETTING TWO SIDES TO BACK AWAY FROM RIGID POSITIONS EACH HAS TAKEN DURING LONG YEARS OF WAR.

NEW MOLD AND NEW ATTITUDES ARE CALLED FOR. SUCH A NEW ENVIRONMENT MIGHT BE ACHIEVED MORE QUICKLY IF MANY PEOPLE-- NOT JUST THOSE IN SAIGON AND PARIS-- COULD BEGIN TALKING WITH EACH OTHER. INITIALLY THERE MIGHT BE FEW CONCRETE RESULTS, BUT EVEN PROCESS OF MEETINGS AND EXCHANGES COULD IN LONG RUN CONTRIBUTE SUBSTANTIALLY TO NEW ATTITUDES AND ATMOSPHERE AND COULD FOSTER TRULY WIDESPREAD FEELING OF RECONCILIATION.

7. " DURING PAST TWO MONTHS I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO FOLLOW CLOSELY THE RATHER NUMEROUS DISCUSSIONS IN KONTUM PROVINCE AND TO OBSERVE REACTIONS OF GVN PARTICIPANTS. I AM CONVINCED THESE DISCUSSIONS HAVE SERVED USEFUL PURPOSE, AMONG OTHERS, OF SHOWING GVN OFFICIALS THAT THEY ARE PERFECTLY CAPABLE OF DEALING WITH THE OTHER SIDE ON AN EQUAL FOOTING AND THAT NVA/ VC ARE, AFTER ALL, HUMAN TOO. GVN OFFICIALS HERE BY NO MEANS TRUST OTHER SIDE' S INTENTIONS AS YET, BUT THEY ARE BEGINNING TO THINK THAT PERHAPS MANY PROBLEMS COULD BE RESOLVED GIVEN DNOUGH DISCUSSION IN THE PROPER ATMOSPHERE.

8. " US NATIONAL INTEREST LIE IN ENCOURAGING THE TWO SIDES TO ADOPT NEW AND MORE FLIXIBLE ATTITUDES TOWARD EACH OTHER. I BELIEVE WE SHOULD STRONGLY RECOMMEND TO GVN THAT IT TAKE INITIATIVE, THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY AND DESPITE THE CONTINUED FIGHTING, TO IMPLEMENT ART. 4 AND TRULY TEST WILLINGNESS OF OTHER SIDE TO MOVE TO A SPIRIT OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION. AT BEST IT WILL BE A SLOW AND PAINFUL PROCESS, BUT POTENTIAL GAINS ARE WELL WORTH THE RISKS INVOLVED.

9. " THE TIME TO ENCOURAGE THE GVN IS NOW, BEFORE THE FIGHTING  
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GROWS AND OLD POSITIONS HARDEN."

10. COMMENT: I BELIEVE MR. MUELLER' S POINTS ARE WELL TAKEN AND DESERVE ATTENTION. WHAT HE ADVOCATES IS WHAT FRAMERS OF PARIS AGREEMENT APPEAR TO HAVE HAD IN MIND. I AGREE THAT WE SHOULD PUSH THE GVN TO MOVE FORWARD, HOWEVER CAREFULLY ( RECONGNIZING THAT THERE ARE PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS TO BE BROKEN ON GVN SIDE AND THAT GVN MUST WORRY ABOUT PUBLIC REACTION). BEST FORMULA MIGHT BE STEP BY STEP, OR TWO STEPS FOWARD AND THEN ONE STEP BACKWARD. THIS WAS ESSENTIALLY HOW GVN JOCKEYED WITH DRV IN PARIS AND AT SAME TIME PREPARED ITS POPULATION FOR ULTIMATE SIGNING OF THE AGREEMENT.

11. A GOOD FIRST STEP MIGHT BE RELAXATION OF JGS DIRECTIVE OF MARCH 3 THAT LIMITED CONTACTS WITH THE OTHER SIDE TO MR AND DIVISION COMMANDERS.

12. I RECALL SITUATION IN FPJMC LAST MONTH WHERE WE WOUND UP IN AGREEMENT WITH DRV AND PRG, AND IN OPPOSITION TO GVN, ON PROPOSED APPEAL FOR DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN TROOP COMMANDERS AT ALL LEVELS. I BELIEVE OUR APPROACH NOW SHOULD BE BEHIND- THE- SCENES ENCOURAGEMENT OF GVN TO ADOPT A MUCH MORE FLEXIBLE STANCE.  
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